

Appl. No.: 09/802,701
Amdt. dated September 24, 2004
Reply to Office Action of June 8, 2004

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-18 are pending.

Rejections under 35 USC §§ 102 and 103

Claims 6-17 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0156720 ("Chow"). Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over Chow in view of U.S. Patent 6408282 ("Buist"). Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over Chow.

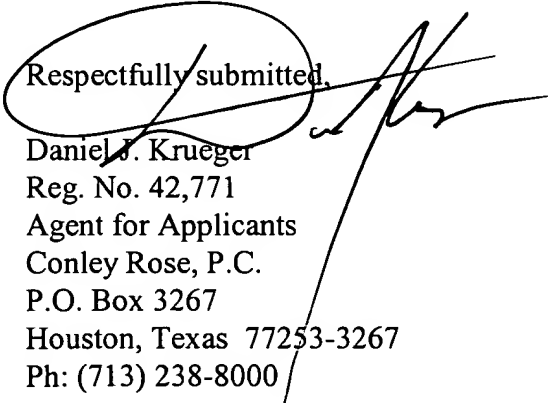
Applicants hereby submit a Rule 131 Declaration of Prior Invention to antedate Chow. As provided in the attached declaration, applicants had a reduction to practice on March 13, 2000, and further, applicants have a filing date within one month of the earliest possible effective date for Chow. In view of the declaration, applicants respectfully submit that Chow is not prior art, and accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the attached declaration, applicants have not raised various important differences between the claims and the cited art. However, such differences exist and applicants reserve the right to raise such differences in the future should the examiner disagree with applicants' views on the cited reference's status as prior art.

If any fees are inadvertently omitted or if any additional fees are required or have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Conley Rose, P.C. Deposit Account Number 03-2769/1991-00100/HDJK.

Respectfully submitted,


Daniel J. Krueger
Reg. No. 42,771
Agent for Applicants
Conley Rose, P.C.
P.O. Box 3267
Houston, Texas 77253-3267
Ph: (713) 238-8000